



Flagstaff Xeriscape Council

It's Not Enough to Wish for Rain – Plan Ahead



Seven Principles Of Low Water Landscaping

1. Plan And Design (see Water Use Zones)

Take the time to plan before you plant. Create different water-use zones and choose appropriate plants; consider variety, size, texture, color, and bloom time. Water zones are: **Moderate** - weekly or more irrigation. For practical and economical reasons plants with the highest water needs are placed closest to the home; **Low** - monthly irrigation; and **Very Low** - little or no irrigation once established.

2. Design Practical Turf Areas

Turf grasses are more expensive and intensive to maintain than most other landscape plants. Limit the size of lawn areas to an amount you will actually use. Consider using a low-water alternative like Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) instead of thirsty Kentucky Blue Grass (*Poa pratensis*).

3. Work With Your Soil

If necessary, amend your soil with organic matter such as compost or aged manure prior to planting. This will improve root development, and increase water penetration and retention. Be aware that some native plants may not benefit from additions of organic matter; loosening the soil may be all that is needed.

4. Use Appropriate Plants

Choose native plants and plants with low water needs whenever possible. Group plants with similar water requirements, placing them in the appropriate water zone.

5. Cover The Soil

Mulches are made from a variety of materials including bark, pine needles and decorative stone. Covering the soil will provide a protective layer to retain moisture, prevent erosion, reduce weeds, and provide a finished look to the garden.

6. Irrigate Efficiently

Water deeply and less often. Even low water plants can become water hogs when over-watered. Watering in the morning or late night will reduce evaporative loss. The City of Flagstaff has established a watering schedule: even numbered addresses water Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday; odd numbered addresses water Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. WATER ONLY BEFORE 9 AM and AFTER 5 PM.

7. Maintenance

A properly maintained landscape conserves water. Check irrigation systems regularly to make sure they are working correctly, and adjust timers as the seasons change and plants become established. Proper pruning, weeding, and mulch will save water and enhance the beauty of your landscape.

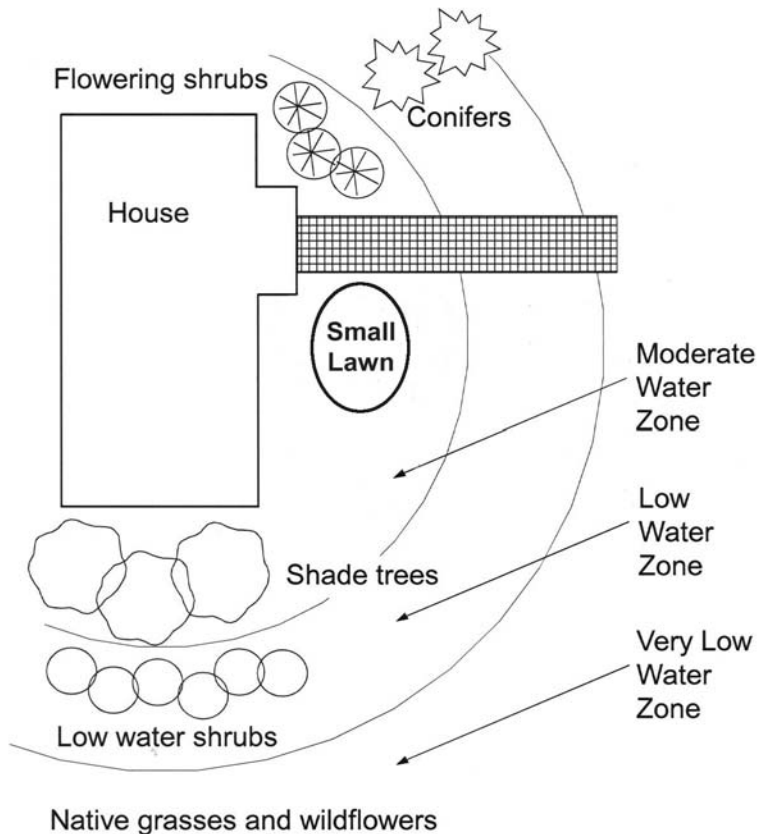
Water Use Zones -

Planting in specific zones can create a water-efficient landscape that is both beautiful and functional.

Moderate: This is the zone containing plants with the highest water requirements. This zone is often located close to the house in high use and/or high visibility areas. These locations will require more watering and should be limited to focal points, such as entrance and functional areas.

Low: Plants growing in this zone require infrequent watering. This area may need supplemental water during the dry months.

Very Low: Located farthest from the house, the most drought-tolerant plants in this area require little, if any, supplemental water once established. This area may need additional watering in times of extreme drought.



Useful Information Sources

Books

- *Natives Plants for High-Elevation Western Gardens*. 2003. Busco, J. and N. R. Morin, Fulcrum Publishing.
- *Beyond the Ponderosa: Successful Landscape Trees for Higher Elevations in the Southwest*. 1998. DeGomez, T. and J. Bailey. Flagstaff Community Tree Board.
- *Waterwise Gardening*. 1989. Sunset Books, Lane Publishing.
- *The Xeriscape Flower Gardener*. 1991. Knopf, J. Johnson Books.
- *Waterwise Landscaping with Trees, Shrubs & Vines*. 1994. Knopf, J. Chamisa Books.
- *Xeriscape Gardening*. 1992. Ellefson, Stephens & Welsh. MacMillan Publishing.
- *Xeriscape Plant Guide*. 1996. Denver Water. Fulcrum Publishing.

Web Resources

- *The Arboretum at Flagstaff* - www.thearb.org
- *Xeriscape Colorado!* - www.xeriscape.org
- *Colorado State University Extension Service* - www.ext.colostate.edu
- *Xeriscape Council of New Mexico* - www.xeriscapenm.com/index.html

Flagstaff Xeriscape Council Sponsors

- Arizona Native Plant Society
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- City of Flagstaff Utilities Department
(928) 779-7685
www.flagstaff.az.gov
- Coconino Community College
(928) 527-1222
www.coconino.edu/
- Coconino Cooperative Extension
(928) 774-1868
cals.arizona.edu/Coconino/
- Flagstaff Native Plant and Seed
(928) 773-9406
www.nativeplantandseed.com/
- The Arboretum at Flagstaff
(928) 774-1442
www.thearb.org/
- Warner's Nursery & Landscape Company
(928) 774-1983